

Project Summary and Resource Determination Form – 20190221 Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

1.0 Project Information

Responsible Official has approved Project Proposal: Y	Comment Due Date: 10/10/2019
Project Title: East Castle Remote Avalanche Device Installation, Site 00	
Project Lead/Manager: Ben Kraja	
Applicant/Proponent (if applicable): Alta Ski Area	
District(s) (Select all that apply): Salt Lake Ranger District	
General Location: Alta Ski Area, Supreme Lift, East Castle Area, Salt Lake County, Utah.	
Elevation Range (feet): 10,350 feet	
Legal Land Description: T3E R3S Section 9	
County(s) (Select all that apply): Salt Lake	
Project Map Included: Yes	GIS Shapefiles Included: N
Amount of new disturbance (acres): up to 16 square feet	
Amount of previous disturbance (acres): 0 acres	
Amount of TOTAL disturbance (acres): up to 16 square feet	
Duration of Project: Summer of 2020	
Management Prescription(s) (Select all that apply): 4.5 (Developed Recreation)	
Type of NEPA (Select One): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CE <input type="checkbox"/> EA <input type="checkbox"/> EIS	
If CE, list Category (select all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.	

2.0 Project Summary

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of this project is to install one additional avalanche control device in the East Castle area.

The East Castle area is located within Alta Ski Area's special use permit and is accessed from the Supreme chairlift. This area includes several significant avalanche paths that must be controlled for skiers to ski in this area. In addition, the avalanche paths frequently run onto and over the Rock 'N Roll ski run, a popular intermediate ski run, which results in frequent closure of the ski run during and after storms.

This area is currently controlled using one Avalauncher and explosives deployed by helicopter and ski patrollers. Use of the helicopter and ski patrollers on the slope is restricted during storm cycles and use of the Avalauncher is restricted when the ski area is open. Consequently, this area and the Rock 'N Roll ski run are closed regularly when the rest of the ski area is open. The use of remote avalanche control devices would reduce exposure of employees and the skiing public to avalanche hazard and would reduce the periods of closure due to avalanche risk. In addition, it would enable Alta to reduce its use and dependency on Avalauncher systems.

Five sites were approved for remote avalanche device installation in Alta's December 2018 Environmental Assessment. Additional analysis of the area has determined that an additional site (Site 00) is needed for avalanche control work in this area (see figures below).

Proposed Action:

Alta Ski Area requests the addition of Site 00 for the installation of a remote-control avalanche device. The proposed device would be a Wyssen Tower. It would be installed on a rock outcroppings on the slope. A one square meter concrete footing would be drilled into the solid limestone in this location. A 30-foot tower would be placed on the footing. A magazine of explosives would be placed by helicopter on top of the tower which would dispense explosives for avalanche mitigation through remote signal. The explosive would be detonated in the air above the snowpack for better effect on weak layers and the triggering of avalanche releases. The explosive magazine would be completely removed during summer months.

This tower placement would be located mid slope and would have no visual impact on the skyline.

Equipment, personnel, and materials would be transported to the site via helicopter. The work would primarily be done by hand by Alta Ski Area personnel and subcontractors.

A vegetation and wetland survey was performed by Cirrus Ecological Solutions, LC for the area of disturbance. No federally listed threatened or endangered, or Forest Service Sensitive plant species were found in area of disturbance. No wetlands or other Waters of the U.S. are present.

This project would be done in conjunction with the installation of several other Wyssen towers previously approved in Alta's December 2018 Environmental Assessment. Alta Ski Area would complete this project during the summer of 2021.

Required Design Criteria as per Resource Determinations:

Implement ski area BMPs.

3.0 Map



